

zen of a free State appropriates to himself a portion of the reputation which belongs to the State itself. As that reputation is raised, his self-respect is increased; and if self-respect be not itself a virtue, it is assuredly one of the best safeguards against the degradation of vice.

Impressed with these sentiments which they entertain in common with the great body of our people, yet unacquainted with operations of the kind proposed by Mr. Hughes, and comparing the present mutilated and defaced Statue with its former well remembered perfect and finished state, the committee entered upon the proposed inquiry with strong fears that an entire restoration was impracticable. They rejoice to say that these fears have been dispelled. If confidence can be reposed in the testimony of the most honored and enlightened men in our land, Mr. Hughes is competent to accomplish all that he promises. If a judgment can be formed from what he has already done, the task which he pledges himself to execute is not beyond his ability. With perfect candour he has laid before the committee the details of his intended operations, and has invited the freest inquiry from every member. Your committee fully believe that he can not merely repair, but restore the Statue, perfect, durable and with all its original grandeur and elegance. He engages to do this for the sum of five thousand dollars, to be paid to him in such equitable instalments as may be arranged between himself and any person whom the Legislature shall designate. Mr. Hughes has also entered into a statement of the probable costs and expenses attending the proposed undertaking, which satisfies the committee that it cannot be to him one of much pecuniary emolument. Indeed, gain appears to weigh but little in his estimation. With the enthusiasm of an artist devoted to his profession, he seems impelled by the ambition of becoming the restorer of the Statue of Washington, and thus to connect his name with that of the great Canova.

One fact highly honorable to the disinterestedness of Mr. Hughes, your committee take pleasure in stating. A necessary preliminary step to the restoration of the Statue is the making of a perfect cast in Plaster. It is represented to your committee that in all such cases it is usual for the artist to retain this model in order that he may be enabled to exhibit it as a specimen of his skill. Upon the intimation of a wish that he would forego this claim, Mr. Hughes readily assented, upon condition that he might be permitted to present the cast to the University of our State.

The Statue is the property of the people of North Carolina. It cost them a large sum, and in the estimation of competent judges its value exceeded the cost. In its present condition it is without use and without value. The inclemencies of our atmosphere, unless its injuries be immediately repaired, must soon destroy it entirely. The duty of attempting its restoration ought to be begun now, or abandoned altogether.

In the opinion of your committee it would be a wasteful parsimony, by a refusal of five thousand dollars, to permit the destruction of public property worth five times that sum. In their opinion, the abandonment of this once magnificent monument to the fate with which it is threatened, would subject North Carolina to the just reproach of the other States of the confederacy, of all who venerate the memory of Washington, and of the admirers of genius and art throughout the civilized world. In their opinion, though the people of North Carolina may be poor, they are ready to encounter any expenditure which is demanded by a just respect for themselves; and your